



Committee On Finance

Max Baucus, Ranking Member

NEWS RELEASE

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STATEMENT OF SENATOR MAX BAUCUS CLEAN DIAMONDS TRADE ACT

I am pleased that the Senate will shortly consider the Clean Diamonds Trade Act, which yesterday passed overwhelmingly in the House.

Ending world trade in so-called "conflict diamonds" is a moral necessity. Trade in conflict diamonds funds military insurgencies in Africa, promoting and prolonging the human rights abuses and human suffering of local populations. It has been reported that conflict diamonds may also be funding the operations of terrorist groups.

The Clean Diamonds Trade Act implements U.S. commitments under the Kimberley Process. This joint effort by the diamond trading countries of the world -- together with the world diamond industry and many humanitarian, human rights and faith-based organizations -- creates an international certification scheme for diamonds. The Kimberley Process Certification Scheme enables governments and industry to assure that imported diamonds come from "clean" sources and assures consumers that their purchases are not funding warfare or terrorism.

Years of work have gone into this legislation. I want to commend my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who have worked long and diligently on this issue.

I also want to recognize the efforts of the diamond industry and the many civil society groups who have worked so hard to find common ground in this legislation.

By passing the Clean Diamonds Trade Act, the United States will fulfill its international obligation to implement the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme. The legislation makes it possible for the United States to continue playing a leadership role in the fight to bring conflict diamond trade to an end once and for all.

I am proud to have played a role in shaping this important legislation.